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good of the public as they once worked for their own pocketbooks. In other words lack of the spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice is the source of the failure of bolshevism. It would make social experiments of a far more worthy and favorable type fail as completely. If the world of industry and of politics is to move forward in the direction in which it now appears to be headed it will need an increasing fund of idealism and altruism on which to draw if it is to have

any hope of success. And where can the world find these except in the Christian religion? Christianity never was so necessary to the world as now. Christ summons men from the Cross today with an appeal which the war and the aftermath of the war have immensely strengthened. Never had the church greater assurance for the conviction that it has a message that the world needs, and a message that will meet the world's need, than now.

OCCULTISM OLD AND NEW

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Men are rational but not always reasonable. Religion is reasonable, but religious practices are not always rational. Just now we are seeing how the failure to make religion rational makes men unreasonable. There are more things in the universe than our reason can grasp, but the true explanation of no fact can be irrational. Whatever our feeling is as to the legitimacy of the possibility of communication with the dead, we shall do well to take warning from the past. The unexplained is not necessarily the unexplainable. This article shows that even most respectable people may be primitive in their superstitions.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century there appeared in America a series of manifestations which time has named "the witchcraft delusion." In the nineteenth century appeared another epidemic of occultism which has taken new life and energy during the past few years and which we now know as "spiritualism" or "spiritism." What term may be used in the twenty-third century we can only attempt to guess. These movements, being far apart in time and developing in very different social environments, are in many respects dif-

ferent from one another, but in their fundamental character and in the phenomena involved they parallel one another in a striking way. Following are some of the points of similarity in these two widely separated social epidemics.

1. *Their historic origins are similar.*—Of course a belief in witches was common in the seventeenth century, but the Salem craze was initiated by a group of young girls who met in the home of the village pastor and learned palmistry and magic tricks from a slave girl, Tituba. Influenced by the common talk about

witches, these girls charged Tituba and two old women of the village with having bewitched them. Samuel Parris, the minister, was evidently convinced of the genuineness of the claim, and it is probable that these girls, or at least some of them, possessed what we now call mediumistic powers. As the delusion swept through the community, the more highly suggestible showed the commonly accepted symptoms of demoniac possession or else seemed to discover them in others. The historic origin of spiritism in this country was similarly in the behavior of young girls. Mysterious rappings in a western New York home were tested and found to respond as signals to questions, apparently being made at the instigation of some intelligence which the superstitious believed to be communicating in this curious way from the world of departed spirits. It was discovered that the rapping depended upon the presence of the sisters, Margaret and Kate Fox, and these young girls became the center of a rapidly developing cult. In 1850 they went to New York and the manifestations accompanying them there occasioned wide interest. Mediums appeared all over the country. In 1888 Margaret Fox made a public confession of the pretense involved in the spiritistic manifestations, but this confession she later denied.

2. *Both were affected by periods of misfortune.*—Mysticism, normal as well as abnormal, is heightened in such a period. LeBon in his *Psychology of Revolution* says:

Among the characteristics of the popular mind we must mention that in all peoples and all ages it has been saturated with mysticism. The people will always be convinced

that superior beings—divinities, governments, or great men—have the power to change things at will. This mystic side produces an intense need of adoration. The people must have a fetish, either a man or a doctrine. This is why, when threatened with anarchy it calls for a Messiah to save it.

Certainly a time of distress develops a normal mysticism, and just as certainly such a period is often marked by the more unusual mystical states. The witchcraft delusion has for its background the constant struggle of the early New Englanders with a savage wilderness and still more savage men. Life was hard, filled with dangers, beset with mysterious fears, and in this atmosphere a belief in familiarity with evil spirits found ready growth. The relation of the present recrudescence of spiritism, especially in England, to the war may be clearly seen. Where few homes are untouched by the death angel of war the feeling of need for some help that is more than human is naturally and keenly felt. Some can be satisfied with a firm faith in God and his goodness, with the belief that death is not essentially cruel and that life may not end with death. But the heart's feeling of emptiness and loneliness makes especially welcome to many the assurance, through materialistic means, of the continuity of life. In the case of both movements being considered, misfortune amounting almost to despair has heightened the suggestibility of the witnesses and thereby complicated the evidential value of their testimony.

3. *Both these occultisms have been accepted by highly intellectual people.*—It is a peculiar psychological fact that hard-headed business men are frequently the chief clients of clairvoyants and medi-

ums, and that men of generally clear scientific habits of thought may be decidedly suggestible and non-critical outside the confines of their own branch of science. Certainly such men as Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may be accepted as men of scientific judgment in their own respective fields of study. It is not so certain that they are the best of witnesses in matters involving mediumship. It is not hard-hearted criticism to suggest that the fact of the personal history of bereavement and loss behind the spiritism of such men may affect their judgment in the field of the so-called occult. To quote Professor Jastrow:

Let there be no confusion as to the legitimate and illegitimate bearing of professional prestige upon the status of a belief of this extra-scientific tenor. If John Doe and Richard Roe are inclined to believe in "materializations" or "telekinesis" because they learn that this and that scientific man has examined and been convinced, their inclination is warranted only in so far as it bases itself upon an ascription to the men of science of a superior equipment to decide this issue, and upon an equal assurance that the same qualities of mind are used in their professional as in their non-professional research.

There is no reason to doubt that Cotton Mather, the famous seventeenth-century clergyman, who believed in witchcraft and examined into the cases of supposed demon-possession, was a man of clear intellectual power. It may, however, be fairly questioned if there were not in his case, as in that of modern scientific believers in the newer occultism, non-intellectual elements of mental experience, stimulated by the circumstances of the time as well as by the

natural tendency to mysticism, which rendered him questionable as a witness. Certainly there is much in the testimony of recent witnesses to spiritistic phenomena that seems of the nature of uncritical assumption. For example, how does Sir Oliver Lodge know that the movement of the table in a "table sitting" which he reports indicates affection? He writes:

We talked a lot to him. I asked if he remembered his journey with me out to Italy, and the Pullman car, etc. At this he knocked very affectionately against me.

Of another séance he writes:

The table now seemed to wish to get into Lady Lodge's lap, and made most caressing movements to and fro, and seemed as if it could not get close enough to her.

This might be humorous were it not so tragically pathetic.

4. *Both these movements involved social contagion.*—Beliefs are more than reasoned mental processes, always. There is a normal, everyday mysticism involved in all our principal beliefs. Our political, social, religious creeds are not determined by pure reason. It is to be hoped that reason enters into their construction, but it is our affective nature, with all its complexities and its subconscious ramifications, which very largely determines the beliefs of the most hard headed of us. It is the nature of the more primitive and feelingful elements of mind to respond, under adequate stimulation, to suggestion. This response, so long as suggestion lead in the direction of the welfare of the individual and the race, is a wholesome one. In certain situations there is a vigorous individual response, conditioned by the social nature of the mind, which may

occur so generally as to constitute a social contagion. This is not necessarily a crowd psychology; it may be a condition affecting the people of a country who share a similar mental atmosphere. LeBon thus comments on popular contagions:

Mental contagion may affect a whole people instantaneously, but more often it operates slowly, creeping from group to group. Thus was the Reformation propagated in France.

A people is far less excitable than a crowd; but certain events—national insults, threats of invasion, etc.—may arouse it instantly.

The instantaneousness of mental contagion, of which LeBon writes, is an exaggeration, but in both witchcraft and spiritism we have the conditions for the ready transmission of social suggestion. Just as one's physical environment, involving lack of ventilation, poor or insufficient food, lack of sleep, etc., creates a favorable condition for disease germs, so the common superstition of the seventeenth century, the life of danger and fear, the stern necessities of a wilderness existence, made an ideal seed bed for such a mental epidemic as the witchcraft delusion. As to spiritism, Jastrow has said:

The phenomena now associated with modern Spiritualism, with their characteristic *milieu*, breed the typical atmosphere of the séance chamber, which resists precise analysis, but which in its extreme form involves morbid credulity, blind prepossession, and emotional contagion.

When we add to this séance atmosphere the upsurging emotional forces set free by the losses and sufferings of the Great War, we have a condition extremely favorable to mediumistic phenomena.

5. *Both witchcraft and spiritism have used unusual types of evidence.*—Because of the more general acceptance of the theory supporting the witchcraft delusion, this evidence was for a time accepted even by learned clergymen and jurists. The spiritistic evidence is more generally questioned. Such an investigator as Doctor Tanner approached the study of occult phenomena "in a spirit of doubt that inclined toward belief." In the Preface of her book, *Studies in Spiritism*, she says:

I was inclined to think that I should finish the work a believer at least in telepathy. So far is this from being the case that the more I have read and seen of such experiences, the more amazing has it come to seem that two theories like telepathy and spirit communication, which are unsupported by any valid evidence, should have obtained credence to-day; and the more incomprehensible has it come to be that men should be willing to stake their professional reputations upon the inaccuracies and rubbish that pass for "scientific" facts in these matters.

In the case of Salem witchcraft, "spectral evidence" was not only popularly accepted but was admitted in court. As an example of what was meant by this sort of evidence, "When a bewitched person declared he saw an alleged witch coming in the form of a yellow bird it was held good evidence, though no one else could say he saw a bird." There are immense masses of evidence presented by believers in spirit communication which are of precisely the same "spectral" character. It is notorious that tests of spiritistic phenomena are commonly complicated by the darkness of the séance chamber, as well as by conditions naturally producing extreme sug-

gestibility; and while many mediums are doubtless sincere, there is evidence of a vast amount of intentional delusion. We need not impugn the motives of all mediums by calling attention to these cases of voluntary misleading, but there is proof that unintentional delusion, involved in the mental state of the average sitter, frequently affects the evidential value of the manifestations through genuine mediumship.

The unscientific nature of much of the spiritistic evidence is indicated in the admission, in the case of certain "materialization phenomena" reported by Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing, that "the experiments cannot be conducted in white light." The dependence of spiritistic phenomena upon conditions which preclude thorough scientific investigation gives rise to many curious developments of theory.

When even so ardent an advocate of spirit communication as Hyslop is forced to assume, in order to explain the incoherences in his sittings, that the departed spirit is in a state of trance or of partial suffocation or of dream, and that his ravings are caught by the controlling spirit, Rector, who then affects the hand of the entranced medium, which then writes imperfectly the imperfectly heard and imperfectly spoken message, we get a realizing sense of how little the theory of spirit communication has in it of real law and order.¹

Sir Oliver Lodge enters this apology for the nature of the presented evidence for "the interaction of intelligences":

Early attempts, like those of the present, must be unsatisfactory and crude; especially as the evidence is of a kind to which scientific men for the most part are unaccustomed;

so no wonder they are resentful. Still the evidence is there, and I for one cannot ignore it. Members of the Society for Psychical Research are aware that the evidence already published—the carefully edited and sifted evidence published by their own organization—occupies some forty volumes of *Journal* and *Proceedings*; and some of them know that a great deal more evidence exists than has been published, and that some of the best evidence is not likely to be published, not yet at any rate. It stands to reason that, at the present stage, the best evidence must often be of a very private and family character.

It is precisely upon the ground of the "private and family character" of much of the evidence, that its credibility is doubted. An almost insuperable emotional blockade prevents Sir Oliver from giving the same clear, unbiased, scientific attention to these phenomena which is shown in his professional studies. Possibly even his physical theories are colored by the normal desire for the intellectual integration of his spiritism with his physics. His theory appears to be a "triplism" of matter, ether, and mind, which interact upon one another. Whatever warrant there may be for this theory, is it not possible that it is affected, in Lodge's case, by the emotional predispositions involved in his acceptance of spirit communication?

6. *Both movements involve mediumistic phenomena.*—Both the witches and those who believed in them were under the influence of subconscious forces stimulated by suggestion; and the same may be said of modern mediums and their clients. The Salem witches, under the influence of an unusually tense social strain, developed symptoms of hysteria.

¹ Tanner, *Studies in Spiritism* (New York, 1910), p. 378.

Similarly modern occultists have frequently developed distinct hysterical traits, as in the "M.A.M." incidents which furnish a singularly circumstantial parallel to witchcraft. It is probable that in all cases of genuine mediumship there is a condition of unusual suggestibility. Faith in the medium is an evidence of this; an attitude of expectancy, with regard to spiritistic manifestations, is an evidence; the frequent association of the phenomena with personal bereavement and other circumstances involving highly emotional states is another evidence. Napoleon, who had unusual insight into human nature, said:

Men are difficult to understand if we want to be just. . . . Do they know themselves? Do they account for themselves very clearly? There are virtues and vices of circumstance.

Spiritistic phenomena are always surrounded by an aura of circumstance which we, like Napoleon, may well hold responsible for many of their misrepresentations. It is clear that the desire for mediumistic phenomena has a close relation to one's credulous attitude. The case of Paladino, for example, has been thoroughly exposed, but Sir Oliver Lodge writes concerning it:

I am therefore in hopes that the present decadent state of the Neapolitan woman may be only temporary and that hereafter some competent and thoroughly prepared witness may yet bring testimony to the continued existence of a genuine abnormal power existent in her organism.

There is an antecedent probability that when one wishes so ardently to prove a spiritistic case one will develop a bias which may impair one's reliability as a witness.

7. *The theories of the believers in both witchcraft and spiritism involve materialization.*—Neither type of belief is thoroughly "spiritualistic," to use the term which some believers distinguish from "spiritism," for each demands physical demonstration of spirit relationship. The demand of both is for the demonstration through physical agency which Jesus mentioned when he said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." A truly spiritual life is sustained by faith. It is a common form of materialism that insists on walking by sight. Neither the seventeenth-century Puritans nor the twentieth-century spiritists were essentially non-spiritual, but both gave credence to alleged materializations as well as to the "possession" of a human organism by other than its usual spirit inhabitant. Just why, in the case of spiritism, the ghostly visitor should use the curious methods of the usual séance does not appear, save as one recognizes their evident aid to the suggestibility of the sitter. Is it possible that none of the departed knows the Morse code, and would the tapping of a telegraph key require more energy than the tossing of tables?

8. *Both witchcraft and spiritism grow out of common mystical and intellectual tendencies.*—Jastrow speaks of "the natural tendency to believe in telepathy." This tendency has its roots in a fundamental mysticism in man, who must always find some truths not derived from clear judgments. The mystical impulse, being native and instinctive, may like any instinctive tendency develop in exaggerated and unwholesome fashion. The tendency to believe in telepathy or in spirit communication also proceeds

from a common tendency to try to reduce all mental processes to a basis of cognition. Man is both mystical and intellectualistic. From childhood he attempts to reduce his universe, both visible and invisible, to order. His superstitions arise from a native mystical attitude and also from this insistence upon the intellectual as well as the affective unity of his world. He must have an explanation for all phenomena. Having a native outreach toward immortality, he must needs bring immortality within his intellectual grasp. Hence he conceives of a spiritual "body," of spiritual interaction with matter or ether, and hence, when a loved one dies, he is better satisfied if he can establish some sort of communication through the mediation of the senses.

The normal reaction to the mystery which surrounds our life is neither a cold intellectualism nor an unreasoned mysticism. It is the reaction of an open mind, sensitive to inner promptings, and also sensitive to the regulative function

of reason. It involves such a balance of these and all other mental forces as will tend toward a life of usefulness and inner harmony. It finds no inconsistency between a highly sensitive affective life and a keenly critical intellectual life. Hence the normal twentieth-century mind welcomes the warm and vital feeling attitude toward the unknown, both present and future, which is in full harmony with reason and scientific observation, while it insists upon the tried and approved standards of science and intellectual criticism. This sane balance of attitude is not new. It was, after all, inherently characteristic of the New England Puritans, for the witchcraft mania soon ended, leaving a people ashamed and repentant. The mystical impulses stirred by the Great War have resulted in no such cruel injustice as was involved in the case of witchcraft. Indeed, if these impulses function normally and are held in the restraint of a reasonable mental harmony, they may be of the highest service to the world.